



OFFICINE
PANERAI

Press Release

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***THE FRANKLIN ANNOUNCES OFFICINE PANERAI
AS PRESENTING SPONSOR FOR UPCOMING
“GALILEO, THE MEDICI AND THE AGE OF ASTRONOMY” EXHIBITION***

Philadelphia, PA, February 20, 2009 –The Franklin is pleased to announce that Italian fine watchmaking company Officine Panerai will be the presenting sponsor for its upcoming exhibition, “*Galileo, the Medici and the Age of Astronomy*.” The Galileo exhibition will launch as a world exclusive exhibit and will feature one of only two remaining telescopes owned and built by Galileo beginning April 4-September 7, 2009. Timed to take place during the 400th anniversary of Galileo’s astronomical discoveries, as well as the International Year of Astronomy, the exhibit will explore the extraordinary effect that Galileo’s work, as well as that of other luminaries during the age of the Medicis, had on science and on the world.

The exhibit “Galileo, the Medici and The Age of Astronomy” is presented by the Italian fine watchmaking company Officine Panerai, in recognition of its Tuscan origins and tradition linked to the measurement of time. Originally a supplier of highly specialised watches to the Royal Italian Navy, Officine Panerai re-interprets today its 150-year-long passion: the creation of high precision timepieces with a strong identity rooted in distinction, aesthetics and function.

“Panerai’s goal is to interpret at the highest level Galileo’s heritage: the spirit of research and innovation, the commitment to create beautiful artifacts and the vision of science and technology as global factors. We are proud to bring Galileo and the Medici’s heritage worldwide through this exhibition today, and through our timepieces everyday” said Angelo Bonati, Officine Panerai CEO.

“We would like to thank Officine Panerai, and all our sponsors, for their unprecedented support,” said Dennis Wint, President and CEO of The Franklin. *“This is one of the most important exhibits ever to come to The Franklin, and we are proud to showcase this crucial moment in our scientific history with a broad and rich series of art and artifacts that tell the compelling tale of Galileo and the Medici’s accomplishments.”*

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Additional sponsors include **Celestron**, who has been named the Astronomy Sponsor of *Galileo* and sponsor of The Franklin's popular monthly "Night Skies in the Observatory" program for 2009. **PECO**, Proud Corporate Partner of The Franklin Institute, is the Community Sponsor of *Galileo* and **West Pharmaceutical Services** will serve as the official *Galileo* Gala Sponsor. Lead Underwriting support provided by A. Bruce Mainwaring and additional underwriting support provided by GlaxoSmithKline, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and John Diebel. Marketing support is provided by grants from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation.

The one-time only special exhibition at The Franklin was created in partnership with the *Istituto e Museo di Storia della Scienza* of Florence, Philadelphia's Sister City, and the Medici Archive Project. The Franklin was chosen following hundreds of requests for loans of Galileo's telescope during this extraordinary anniversary year.

From April 4-September 7, 2009, the exhibition will add its star power to Philadelphia's premier location for astronomy and space exploration. The exhibit will comprise approximately 7,000 square feet and contain more than 100 artifacts from the *Istituto's* collections, as well as collections from the Uffizi Gallery. The Franklin's exclusive exhibition will mark the first time these artifacts are shown together, providing a rare opportunity to tell the story of Galileo Galilei and the Medici dynasty.

In addition to Galileo's telescope, the exhibition showcases the father of astronomy's accomplishments, his relationship to the Medicis, his discoveries, and his overall impact on not only astronomy, but modern science. The fascinating age of the Medicis will be explored – an age when the patronage of the ruling Medici Grand Dukes created a burst of scientific knowledge that transformed the course of mankind. This wealthy and powerful Florentine family ruled from the 15th to the 18th century, included two popes and many cardinals, and was known for its unparalleled advocacy and patronage of art and science. The exhibit will shed light on the union of art, science and political power that gave rise to Galileo's success. The Medicis were prolific collectors, and the exhibit will also be highlighted by an eclectic range of scientific instruments, along with an assortment of paintings, prints and manuscripts from organizations and regions of Italy. Visitors to The Franklin will be able to experience a rich portrait of their accomplishments, not only in astronomy, but in navigation, math, military and early machinery.

The Franklin and Philadelphia will also be creating an ambitious series of programs centered on the exhibit's concepts, from lectures and educational programs to special multi-media programming events from its famous Fels Planetarium. *The Franklin is the oldest and largest science museum in the United States with both a working telescopic observatory and a state-of-the-art planetarium* Through the exhibit, as well as its programming efforts, The Franklin will explore a cluster of important topics: Galileo's influence in prompting the intellectual shift from Aristotelian natural philosophy to experimental methods that are still central to contemporary scientific methods; the interdisciplinary nature of Italian Renaissance culture, in which art, politics, religion and science were intertwined; an understanding of Galileo's conflict with the church and the society of his time; and the interrelations of science and religion in the present-day – both positive and contentious.

This quadricentennial celebration of the modern era of astronomy has also inspired an extraordinary worldwide effort entitled the International Year of Astronomy (IYA2009), which will be launched in early 2009 by The International Astronomical Union (IAU) under the theme, “The Universe, Yours to Discover.” The Franklin’s Chief Astronomer, Derrick Pitts, was recently named United States spokesman for the effort. This is a highly organized global celebration of astronomy and its contributions to society and culture, with a strong emphasis on education, public engagement and the involvement of young people, with events at national, regional and global levels throughout the whole of 2009. UNESCO has endorsed the IYA2009 and the United Nations proclaimed the year 2009 as the International Year of Astronomy.

About Panerai

Officine Panerai was founded in 1860 by Giovanni Panerai, a Florentine purveyor of fine watchmakers. In 1936, at the request of the Royal Italian Navy, the company created precision instruments specifically for naval and diving purposes, including the prototype for the brand's iconic Radiomir watch. Over the years Panerai has become renowned worldwide for their remarkable technical precision and innovation. In 1997 Officine Panerai was acquired by the Richemont Group and launched on the international market the following year. Panerai has boutiques in Los Angeles, Florence, Hong Kong, Shanghai, New York, Buenos Aires, Beijing, Tokyo, Madrid and plans to open in Dubai, Geneva and Qatar later this year. www.panerai.com

About The Franklin

Located in the heart of Philadelphia, The Franklin Institute is a renowned and innovative leader in the field of science and technology learning, as well as a dynamic center of activity. Pennsylvania’s most visited museum, it is dedicated to creating a passion for science by offering new and exciting access to science and technology. One of only four cities in the U.S. chosen to host “*Tutankhamun and The Golden Age of Pharaohs*,” The Franklin Institute has experienced tremendous growth over the past few years, welcoming over 1.75 million visitors in 2007. For more information: www.fi.edu.

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